Module 12

Self & Community Care in Action

https://www.beautifultrouble.org/training/for-trainers

snapshot:
While care should be woven into the fabric of our work, we need to be particularly cognizant of incorporating self and community care when it's action time.

time: *1.5 to 2 hours*

energy level: *Low – High*

materials: *Scenarios, flipcharts, markers, tape, some extra materials you may want to use for the role plays.*

STEPS

1. Set up an Action Planning Role Play with affinity groups or action teams (or however your group does this).
2. Assign each group a scenario and include some "spikes" (challenges to the action) that could create opportunities or reveal gaps to anticipate what supports are needed. You can design spikes that are relevant to your context, but some examples include:
    a. You planned a nonviolent action and were advised that it was a low-risk activity, but little did you know that new protest rules have been imposed and the police are now cracking down on the protest and arresting activists.
    b. You planned a high-risk direct action with a group of activists you've been working with for a year and assumed that everyone was going to be fine. During the action, one of the activists experiences a trauma-response and becomes dysregulated.
3. After the roleplay, have groups reflect on the areas of support needed for that scenario, including what preparations you should make ahead of time and where to get help. Below are some points you may want to consider for reflection:
    a. Pre-action: Was there a deliberate process to identify and address potential risks—such as physical, emotional, political, legal, or cultural— as part of the action planning process? For example, you may create a buddy system, have an assigned "care bear," and/or an assigned security liaison.
    b. In-action: what self-care and community care supports are needed for the action and its aftermath? For example, you may develop a jail solidarity plan or a list of resources such as legal clinics and culturally-appropriate and justice-conscious therapists. Identify who will be the person responsible for liaising between the care provider(s) and other professionals or third parties such as lawyers, healers, police, or community organizations.
    c. Raise or allocate funds to meet basic needs such as days off, transport, or meals: Make sure food and water breaks are in place to maintain the overall wellbeing of your team on the streets.

    d. Post-action: How will affected individuals continue to be supported and what will you do collectively for community care? Examples include scheduling embodied practices, care check-ins, journaling, and support to access professional mental health services.
    e. Post-action/After-care: post-action restoration and resilience.
4. Either in the big group or in small groups, run a debrief by asking participants to think about their own personal lives and what support they personally need in an action. Also, ask the group to think of self-care and community-care strategies they use or have used in challenging situations or times where such support could have been better. Run a debrief of the hand/heart/head/heel—see the Debrief worksheet for more information.,
5. Wrap-up the conversation by reiterating the importance of embedding care strategies as part of our organizing work across the board.

OPTIONS

- **USE OBSERVERS:** If your group is large, or if there are participants unable or unwilling to participate in the role play, designate individuals as observers and have them report back during the debrief on what they've noticed.

- If participants feel demoralized after the role play because things went wrong, **consider running another role play** incorporating the support plan they discussed in their groups to end on a successful note.

TIPS

- Design the scenario for each roleplay to be succinct, with a minimal amount of information to set the stage, but enough to allow for creativity and not limit how participants respond or interact.

- If you are facilitating an intense role play, prepare in advance on how you will move folks into debrief. For example, take a deep breath all together, transform the role play lines into a circle, or count backwards from 10.

- For the debriefs, you may use the 3 F's: Feelings Fact Forward. Keep the debriefs focused on the specific action points, and don't go on tangents. Use this Debrief worksheet for ideas on how to run your debrief.

RESOURCES

- Resources to help you prepare for your action:
    - Checklist on ways to provide care after a protest or action.
    - Know your human rights at a protest or action.
    - Safety guides for direct action.
    - Use the Beautiful Trouble handout to assign affinity groups action roles.
- For handling conflict, see the BATMo! activity on how to creatively manage conflict.
- Use this Early Warning, Early Response process to prepare for upcoming potential conflict scenarios.

- Review the Communication Guidelines for a Brave Space to encourage a safe(r) and more inclusive conversation.

author: Shanil, Sheng, Nadine
